AA000 118 253 4
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

MARIE

A SEASIDE EPISODE

By J. P. Ritter Jr.

CHICAGO, NEW YORK
AND SAN FRANCISCO
BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.
PUBLISHERS

MARIE
A SEASIDE EPISODE

MARIE

A SEASIDE EPISODE

BY

J. P. RITTER, JR.

ILLUSTRATED BY COULTAUS

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO

BELFORD, CLARKE & COMPANY

1888

COPYRIGHT, 1888,
BY
BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.

PS
2718
T514m

626170

MARIE:

A SEASIDE EPISODE.

I.

My tale has naught to do with vulgar men,
Nor every-day affairs, nor common topics,
But with the doings of the "upper ten,"
A pregnant theme for half-a-dozen epics;
Of money, manners, fashions, social duties,
Of gentlemen of leisure, and of beauties.

II.

My story opens with our heroine
And mother at a famous seaside place;
Two large hotels—along the beach a line
Of red-tiled cottages—in front a space
Of glistening sand, up which the ocean rolled,
And where bright groups of summer idlers strolled.

III.

It was a lovely spot. The broad Atlantic
Stretched eastward to the sky, and far away
The slanting sails of stately ships romantic
Could be descried upon a sunny day;
While landward breezes to the senses bore
Faint sounds and odors from some fancied shore.

IV.

But what enhanced its loveliness beyond
All natural beauty of the sea and sky
Was that the world of fashion here had found
A summer theatre for its gayety,
Seeking relief from winter's dissipations
In bathing, sailing, open-air flirtations.

V.

One morning, some days after they arrived,
Marie was walking on the beach alone.
I cannot tell you how she had contrived
To stroll abroad without a chaperone.
If she had acted properly, no doubt
She would not in this way have wandered out.

VI.

But thus she onward walked in revery
Among the children playing on the sand;
Some daring ones, bare-leggéd to the knee,
Pursued and fled the billows on the strand,
Watched by the eyes of pretty nurses; others
Delved with small spades beside their chatting mothers.

VII.

The day was fine—the sea and sky deep blue—
The beach a dazzling white, and dotted o'er
With parasols of many a brilliant hue.
Gay groups were everywhere along the shore,
Some sitting on the sand, and others walking,
But all engaged in flirting, laughing, talking.

VIII.

Marie this bright scene gazed upon demurely,
Unconscious of the glances she attracted,
A circumstance most strange in her sex surely.
She must have been surprisingly abstracted,
For thus she wandered till her footsteps brought her
So near the waves, her shoes were under water.

IX.

Then back she started with a little cry,
And stamped her foot in anger at the ocean,
For having come so unexpectedly
Across her path—an infantile emotion,
And one she should have long ago outgrown,
For nearly nineteen summers had she known.

X.

A peal of laughter greeted this wild act,
And turning quickly round she saw a youth,
Who, seemingly devoid of that fine tact
Which marks good breeding, in a most uncouth
And merry manner stood regarding her.
She gave his glance back with a scornful sneer,

COULTAS

XI.

At which the light of humor left his face.
He doffed his hat, and begged to be excused,
And all with such a mock-heroic grace,
Marie herself seemed instantly amused.
Her scornful lip and frown-contracted brow
Were melted into smiles, she knew not how.

XII.

She saw he was a gentleman. His dress,
His graceful mien, his affable apology
For laughing at a lady in distress,
All answered her exacting etymology
Of this fine word; and then he had large eyes,
As deep and blue as were the summer skies—

XIII.

Eyes that were bent on her in admiration,
Which put her in a pliant, pleasing mood.
Perhaps it was an impulse to flirtation,
Or likelier still a woman's gratitude
For each soft glance of tribute to her beauty,
Which made her then forget her maiden duty.

XIV.

His gaze she now returned with beaming eyes,
And curtly said, " You should not laugh at me!"
What followed this you never would surmise—
A morning walk beside the sunny sea,
A talk embracing all things, from the weather
To plans to pass some future hours together.

XV.

Marie was conscious that it was not right
To speak unintroduced with this young man,
But then her wayward nature took delight
In *outré* acts; being no puritan,
She'd hover on the bound'ry line of evil,
And carry on a skirmish with the Devil.

XVI.

A child of nature, whose impulsive soul
Was swayed by every passion as it passed.
No thought had ever any long control
Over her fancy, going just as fast
As its precursor. Through her airy brain,
Perceptions rarely followed in a train.

XVII.

A butterfly would call her thoughts away
From things most solemn. If she knelt in prayer
At church, and wantonly there chanced to stray
A foolish moth into a neighbor's hair,
A roguish laughter lighted up her face;
She quite forgot how holy was the place.

XVIII.

Her beauty was a kind that artists try
To reproduce in vain. The swift expression
Of every thought was written vividly
Upon her countenance; a quick succession
Of subtle meanings played within her eyes,
Like summer lightnings in the twilight skies.

XIX.

Her hair was dark and most luxuriant,
Her forehead low; and as for her complexion,
A peach, a rose, a lily could not grant
A just comparison. The soft reflection
Of color from a sunset cloud might do—
A delicate, ethereal, roseate hue.

XX.

Imagine now the feelings she excited
Within the bosom of her new-found friend.
With all her ways and words he seemed delighted;
And when their interview had reached an end,
Beside the ocean hour by hour he wandered,
And o'er her graceful acts and speeches pondered.

XXI.

Here let me pause to give some sound advice:
Sound, I repeat, for it proceeds from one
Who, having been himself a sacrifice
To Beauty's candle, knows 'tis wise to shun
Love's retrospective wheeling round a flame;
The circle narrower grows, and then, the same

XXII.

Old story of burned wings and quivering heart!
You know the tragedy, so be advised—
Let every thought of woman's grace depart,
Lest ills might happen you had ne'er surmised;
Or, if you must persist in retrospections,
Dwell only on your idol's imperfections.

XXIII.

Think of her madcap humors and caprices;
Ponder each trifling blemish in her beauty;
Aye, pick her—body, mind, and soul—to pieces,
As though fault-finding were a lover's duty;
Laugh, and declare that love is a delusion:
Then tell me truly what is your conclusion.

XXIV.

Her temper you allow is quick—but then,
That rising color has a witching charm in it;
And though she sometimes smiles on other men,
Perhaps, dear artless child! she sees no harm in it;
And oh! her eyes, so soft, so deep, so loving,
How can she keep them from coquettish roving?

XXV.

You know of others with more perfect faces;
You know of some with natures far more true;
But she has such intoxicating graces
That other women are as naught to you.
Aye, true it is, although most melancholy,
You love her very blemishes and folly.

XXVI.

Such meetings as the one described above
Occurred between these two quite frequently,
Until from friendship sprang an ardent love,
So full of childlike faith and purity,
They kept in silent reverence apart,
With wistful glances speaking heart to heart.

XXVII.

Her lover's name was Percy, and in years
He might have been some twenty-one or two.
Endowed with every grace that most endears
To us young natures, he was manly, true,
Full of imagination, fond of reading,
Handsome of person, elegant in breeding.

XXVIII.

But he was poor. Oh, that condemning word!
How chill it sounds, how void of all romance!
I hold, despite the many tales absurd
Which poets weave their readers to entrance,
That no poor man has any right to love.
This in the sequel I shall fully prove.

I.

The lights were bright, the ball-room thronged with dancers;
A dreamy waltz by Waldteufel kept time,
While Beauty flitted by with sparkling glances,
Her tiny feet beating an airy rhyme
That would have filled a poet's soul with pleasure,
So light it was and graceful in its measure.

II.

Lights, music, flowers, lovely laughing faces;
Dresses of rainbow hues and latest style—
It seemed a fairy garden of the Graces,
Which rosy Pleasure lighted with her smile.
The very wrinkles on the brow of Care
Had melted all away while gazing there.

III.

There was Miss Millie, smiling and demure,
  Upon whose countenance all virtues showed;
And there Miss Lily, classical and pure,
  In whom no kind of passion ever glowed.
Creatures without a grain of earthly leaven,
Like spotless angels that have strayed from heaven.

IV.

There was Miss Rosalie, with laughing eye,
And there Miss Laura, with her languid glances;
There was that dear coquette, Miss Margery,
Whose very scorn the coldest heart entrances;
And there was wealthy Miss Amelia Tooks,
Whose style made up for all she lacked in looks.

V.

There were your anxious mothers, fondly gazing
After their daughters with maternal pride;
And groups of girls each other's dresses praising,
Or glancing at some rival, to deride
The wretched taste she showed, and wond'ring why
The men should dance with her and pass them by.

VI.

There were the single gentlemen, for whom
Miss Millie, Lily, Rosalie, and Laura,
And every other maiden in the room
Displayed her charms and innocently wore a
Dejected look or an expression bland,
As suited best her own designings; and

VII.

There was Marie, with features all aglow
With pleasure, and her darkly-beaming eyes
Changing their hues, as the exultant flow
Of her young blood filled her with ecstasies;
Her ways so volatile, her looks so bright,
Each gazer seemed to feel the same delight.

VIII.

And now where'er she went, a hundred eyes
Hung on her movements, and she knew it too,
Else why should such a gleam of triumph rise
Whene'er she passed that jealous female crew,
Flaunting their fans with envy in a corner,
And who by feigned indifference seemed to scorn her.

IX.

Miss Lily had a grievance all her own;
She threw it off quite well with flighty laughter.
A gentleman who never had been known
To leave her side before, was running after
Our little heroine, all unashamed;
Yet Marie certainly could not be blamed.

X.

"Men are all fools!" said the demure Miss Millie;
"A modest woman has no chance whatever
Against a loud, ill-bred, affected, silly,
Conceited, heartless flirt. If one is clever
And dignified, although she may be fair,
She 'wastes her sweetness on the desert air.'"

XI.

Said Miss Amelia Tooks, "What wretched taste
She shows in wearing such a dowdy gown!
Observe the pattern of that antique waist.
It never could have been made up in town."
But here a man inviting her to waltz,
She had no chance to find out other faults.

XII.

Marie meantime had danced and laughed and chattered,
Now with one gallant coxcomb, now another.
Each man within the room her glances flattered;
Nor could she help it. She could no more smother
Her loving looks than could the sun his beams;
They poured from her in soft magnetic streams.

XIII.

But now her gaze is fixed upon the door,
Where stands a slender youth whose visage wears
Grave trouble, though his years seem but a score.
Well she divines the cause of all his cares;
And the deep, tender light that fills her eyes
Tells of her joy in his sweet miseries.

XIV.

He sees her also, and awaits a chance
To thread the crowded ball-room to her side,
Which having reached, he urges her to dance.
She answers, while drooped lids her dark eyes hide,
"I am engaged for this waltz and the next."
He bites his nether lip and looks quite vexed.

XV.

"Wait but a moment and I'll dance with you,"
She quickly says; "I'll say he came too late."
But as she sees her partner pressing through
The throng to reach her, she must intimate
Her readiness at once, so off they go
In rhythmic movement to the music's flow.

XVI.

Meanwhile Miss Lily's friend, for he it was,
Stood by in anger that the bird had flown,
And she returning in a circle, as
She passed him, seeing on his brow a frown,
And wishing her rude act to mitigate,
Shook her bright head and laughing said, "Too late!"

C. COLLAUD

XVII.

Miss Lily's mother, who was standing near,
Now called her daughter to her side and said,
"What is the matter with your friend, my dear?
It really seems he must have lost his head
Over that silly girl. Give him a chance
To ask your hand for the ensuing dance."

XVIII.

'Not I," said Lily; "let him come to me!"
At this her mother seemed surprised and troubled;
Her mind was filled with grave anxiety,
Which in a short time afterward was doubled,
When Lily's lover and Marie swept by,
Laughing and talking most vivaciously.

XIX.

Oh, mothers, mothers, weighty cares are yours!
Greatest of all a marriageable daughter;
For, having watched her growth for many years,
And to the fount of matrimony brought her,
You find, perchance, there's many an awkward slip
Betwixt the cup of marriage and the lip.

XX.

Your daughter may be wayward, and prefer
To follow her own heart to your fond wishes;
Or, what is worse, a quarrel may occur
To cut an opening in your careful meshes;
Or else some mercenary girl may plan
To come between your daughter and the man.

XXI.

Some artful, scheming little minx, who has
No loving mother to direct her path
T'wards Hymen's temple, but must use, alas!
Her maiden wits—one who excites your wrath
By the outrageous means she takes to rope in
The youthful millionaire you had such hope in.

XXII.

Always anticipate the unexpected.
This is a maxim, not of my own making,
But one, however, not to be neglected
Whene'er you undertake an undertaking.
The unexpected happens every day,
But almost always in an evil way.

XXIII.

An only son, you've sent with pains through college,
May take to drink, sir, and destroy your hope;

A daughter courted, ma'am, without your knowledge
May with some worthless gentleman elope;
Or an expected son-in-law may fail you,
And every unexpected ill assail you.

XXIV.

"An unexpected pleasure," some have said;
"An unexpected pain," have many others;
Precocity may end a stupid head;
The dunce succeed much better than his brothers;
Our expectations show conclusively
We none can boast of a prophetic eye.

XXV.

Now all Miss Lily's relatives expected
To see her soon engaged to her rich friend;

Some were surprised, and others quite dejected,
To find the presence of Marie might tend
To blast the dear girl's hope; for hope lies wilted
Forever on a maiden's breast, when jilted.

XXVI.

It injures grievously a female's pride
To see a lover winging through the air
Away from her, and hear her friends deride
The fruitless efforts she has made to snare
The noble bird; and her revenge is sure
To follow for the wound she cannot cure.

XXVII.

For wounded love there is a balm, they say;
A kiss will heal the hurt, and make the healing
So sweet that some another wound will pray,
To have the ecstasies of that same feeling
Once more. But injure once a woman's pride,
And, tell me, what can make her wrath subside?

XXVIII.

Marie thus made two bitter enemies—
A cold and calculating maiden crossed
In love, or hurt in pride—whiche'er you please;
I never yet have found the two divorced—
And an old dowager in high society,
Who vowed to give her name wide notoriety.

XXIX.

But what cared she? Her thoughts were all intent
On Percy, whom she loved with first sweet love.
He was the sole star in her firmament;
For though midst many others she might move,
He shone with such effulgence to her sight
That, like the sun, he robbed them of their light.

XXX.

And now the two are once again together,
Yet this time not within the crowded hall,
But walking by the dusky ocean, whither
They wandered to escape the heated ball;
And she was leaning on his arm, while he
Seemed wrapt in the profoundest revery.

XXXI.

The moon was up, and a broad path of light
She wove upon the waters. The deep sky
Was studded with great stars intensely bright,
A revelation of infinity.
'Twas after midnight, and so still, it seemed
As if with them the whole creation dreamed.

XXXII.

She wore a bunch of violets on her breast,
And one of these she took between her fingers,
And bending downward tenderly caressed
The faded flower, like one who fondly lingers
Upon the lips of love—her looks meanwhile
Were bent on Percy with a witching smile.

XXXIII.

Then he the silence for the first time broke
With ardent words: "I would I were that flower!"
She in a gentle whisper answering spoke,
"I'd turn you into one had I the power;"
And bending toward the violet again,
Her kisses fell upon it like soft rain.

XXXIV.

"Marie, Marie, I love you!" Percy cried.
She raised to his a radiant, happy face;
"And I love you, my darling," she replied,
Returning tenderly his fond embrace.
Above, the tranquil moon all smiling shone,
A very proper, kind old chaperone.

XXXV.

They lingered thus together, never thinking
How quickly Time flies on the wings of Love;
Nor noticed they how low the moon was sinking;
Nor did they care that some might disapprove
Such lawless conduct: on that heavenly night
They gave their hearts up wholly to delight.

XXXVI.

Perhaps 'twas after one o'clock when they
Were rudely interrupted by a cough,
And that not half-a-dozen yards away.
They quickly turned their heads. It was enough!
There stood Miss Lily and Miss Lily's mother,
Gazing at them and then at one another.

XXXVII.

The reason of their strange appearance there
Is something quite beyond my comprehension.
Was it to breathe the vivifying air?
Or had they a more sinister intention?
Embarrassed Percy gazed upon the sand;
Surprised Marie all unabashed did stand.

XXXVIII.

"Pardon us our intrusion!" said Miss Lily,
In cold, sarcastic tones. Then with her mother
She turned upon the pair a shoulder chilly
And walked away. Marie could scarcely smother
A quick reply, but yet spoke not a word.
The whole affair was awkward and absurd.

XXXIX.

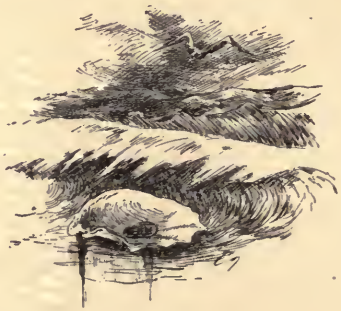
The morning following, when she appeared
Among the girls, she was received quite coldly.
They whispered, looked askance at her, and sneered;
While one or two gazed in her count'nance boldly,
And when she bowed, they gave no indication
Of noticing her well-meant salutation.

XL.

"They none of them have loved," she fondly thought,
"Or certainly they could not blame my action."
But her chagrin soon passed. Her heart was fraught
With grief that drove her almost to distraction;
For Percy on that afternoon must go,
And when again they'd meet she did not know.

XLI.

I will not harrow up your sympathies
With a description of their sad farewell,
Their vows, their words of love, their agonies;
But with a view to art will ring the bell,
To drop upon this second act the curtain,
Leaving my story's dénouement uncertain.



I.

Poor desolate Marie! day after day,
Since Percy left the seashore for the city,
She wandered in a solitary way,
An object to excite the deepest pity;
And sometimes to her eyes the tears would start,
So sorrowful and lonely was her heart.

II.

Weeks passed, and yet her grief had not abated;
Her nature was of that rare, constant kind,
Which cannot in a few short weeks be sated,
As many have that I can call to mind;
Yet all this time, it is but just to mention,
Miss Lily's friend was paying her attention.

III.

I say, in praise of her, that she resisted
For many weeks the ardent demonstrations
In which he pertinaciously persisted;
And even when, with fervid protestations,
He told the burning secret of his heart,
She resolutely waved him to depart.

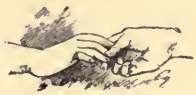
IV.

But who could see the bitter tears he shed,
And not be touched with sympathetic feeling?
Once she relented, turned a pretty red,
And bending o'er his form beside her kneeling,
She stammered that, although she could not love him,
She'd gladly make a friend platonic of him.

Courtney

V.

Did ever yet a belle refuse a man
And let him from her side depart forever,
Without proposing a platonic plan
Of sweet communion for the future? Never!
Her lover once, a friend you must remain,
And love her still, although you love in vain.



VI.

Of course, this feeling I will not impute
To one so free from guile as young Marie
(In reading female hearts I'm not astute);
She innocently planned, it seems to me,
A friendship of the transcendental kind;
Not of the heart, but solely of the mind.

VII.

Each made the other's heart a vestal urn,
In which was lighted a platonic flame—
A melting fire, but one that does not burn,
As you may prove, if you but try the same.
Choose you a woman, homely, good, and stupid,
Then set your mind at rest concerning Cupid.

VIII.

They walked, they talked, they danced with one another,
All in a sympathetic sort of way,
As might a guileless maiden and her brother;
For not a word of love did either say:
A beautiful relationship of sexes,
Which, I confess, my comprehension vexes!

IX.

It strikes me that so far our heroine
Has proved quite faithful to her absent lover.
I wish that I could stop with this last line,
And leave you with a fine impression of her.
But yes! I see you wish to know how ended
Her friendship with this man she had befriended.

X.

You have observed that Nature works by laws
(I wish she worked according to my views),
And one we designate "effect and cause;"
But I, who am not in the least abstruse
In my nomenclature, for your utility
Will rebaptize this law to "mutability."

XI.

Gaze at the clouds and see their changing shapes,
Chased by the wind or melted by the sun,
Now stretching like a continent, with capes
And long peninsulas, and now they run
All scattered like a flock of snow-white sheep,
According to this natural law they keep.

XII.

The mountains crumble, kingdoms pass away;
Proud cities stand upon the wrecks of prouder;
The pyramids which pierce the sky to-day
Will in some thousand years be ground to powder.
Nothing escapes this law, not even Fashion;
Then why expect stability in passion?

XIII.

Yes! even Love can change. I've loved myself
Some twenty times, and every time a "fancy."
It seems that Cupid, wanton little elf!
Takes pleasure in this sort of necromancy.
He pricks us gently with his magic darts,
And we imagine they have pierced our hearts.

XIV.

And lo! we fall into imagined blisses;
Sigh, and imagine that we love profoundly;
In short, imagine all things but the kisses;
For these we give substantially and roundly.
We next discover we love not a particle,
But have been cheated by a "spurious article."

XV.

As day by day passed by, our heroine
Grew gradually more and more vivacious.
For Percy's absence she soon ceased to pine,
Her friend platonic had proved efficacious
In dissipating all her melancholy.
She now began to think her love a folly.

XVI.

Philip was not a man of Percy's mould,
Whom nature had endowed with matchless graces;
But then he had in lieu of beauty, gold;

And women are not won by handsome faces;
A fact apparent, for they daily marry
Plain Tom, repulsive Dick, and ugly Harry.

XVII.

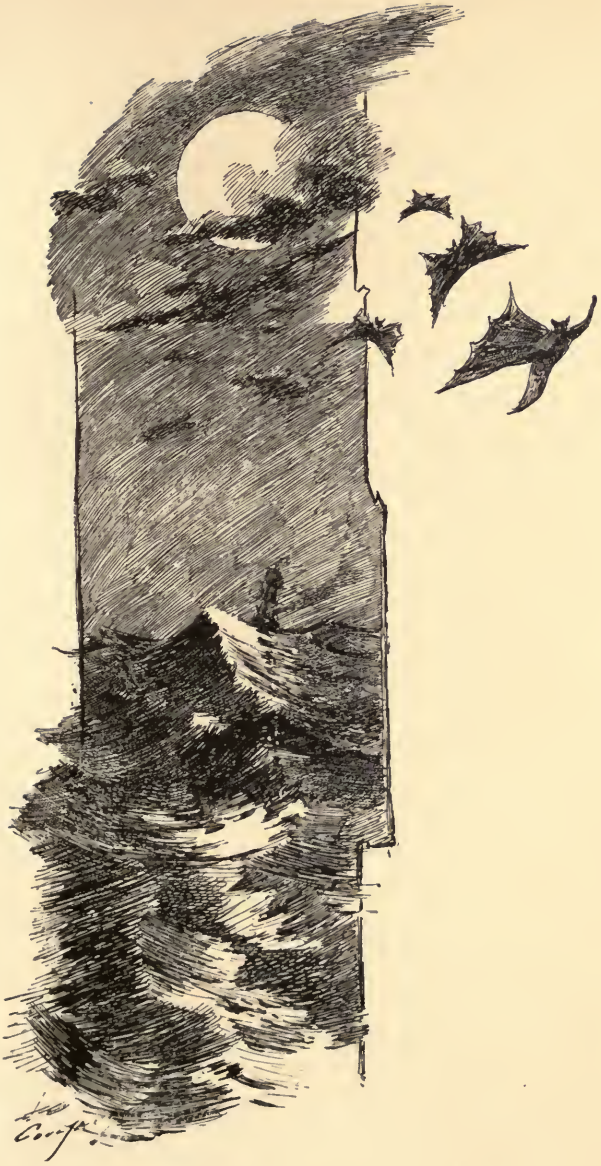
Besides, he occupied a lofty pinnacle
In the resplendent fabric of society;
A hero with the fashionably finical
Who worship Mammon with the purest piety.
You know quite well how all of us are prone
To take the world's opinion for our own.

XVIII.

So, as he was by all caressed and flattered,
Praised for his virtues, for his faults condoned,
To Marie's guileless mind it little mattered
That in her heart Philip was not enthroned.
Thus, by regarding him through others' eyes,
She wished to be possessed of this great prize.

XIX.

The way before me now is so obscure,
So full of pitfalls and of dangerous places,
'Twere wise to make my journey's end secure
By leaving Pegasus to his own paces;
So here upon his neck the reins I'll lay,
Quite sure he'll amble home the safest way.



XX.

'Twas on a certain date, an August night;
The moon was full and near the middle sky;
And yet her aspect seemed not over-bright,
For fleece-like clouds went scudding swiftly by,
Through which she sometimes glared and sometimes frowned,
As though she saw some evil on the ground.

XXI.

The place, a grove of pines, a quiet spot,
With soft, broad, winding paths beneath its roof;
The time—well, that I really have forgot!
Say nine o'clock, 'twill answer well enough;
For what I would be at in all this talking,
Is that beneath these pines our friends were walking.

XXII.

She hung on Philip's arm confidingly;
By which I mean she clung quite closely to it;
Not just the proper thing, it seems to me;
But unsophisticated girls will do it,
Unconsciously, of course—quite unaware
In their abstraction that the arm is there.

XXIII.

She hung on Philip's arm, as I have said,
Conversing in a liquid undertone,
While ever and anon she raised her head
And fixed her beaming eyes upon his own.
How beautiful they were! and what was more,
How full of light he ne'er had seen before!

XXIV.

"Philip," she said, "how heavenly a boon
Is friendship such as ours, and yet how rare!"
But Philip, who was gazing at the moon,
Which seemed to have an eye upon this pair,
Was so absorbed in lunar reveries,
To call him back she gave his arm a squeeze.

XXV.

'Twas but a squeeze, a gentle, timid squeeze,
That in a modest manner seemed to say,
"I'm walking by your side, sir, if you please;
Tis rude to let your fancies from me stray."
But this, of course, he did not understand,
For in a moment more he seized her hand.

XXVI.

There's something in a soft, warm, velvet hand,
So sympathetic, tender, and caressing,—
Though I must give you here to understand
That in such matters I am merely guessing,—
That, though your nature were as cold as snow,
Your veins must feel a little tingling glow.

XXVII.

There's something in a dark, appealing eye;
There's something in the tenderness of smiles;
There's something in a gentle, yearning sigh,
That even a platonic friend beguiles.
Just add sweet blushes on a lovely face,
And should you be the man—God give you grace!

XXVIII.

If Philip put his arm around her waist
And poured forth burning words excitedly;
If she agreed to all he said in haste,
And sunk upon his breast delightedly,
It happened through her little hand, her eye,
Her smile, her blush, her gentle, yearning sigh.

XXIX.

The moon meantime was ominously blinking
Behind a rifted cloud. 'Twas evident
This sort of thing was not quite to her thinking,
For at this moment she with fierceness rent
The sombre veil before her face in two,
And with a disapproving glare looked through.

XXX.

It chanced they then were standing in a glade,
Which suddenly became as light as day,
When, lo! Marie, whose head was gently laid
Upon her lover's shoulder, broke away
From his embrace, crying in terror, "Mercy!"
For right before her stood the ghost of Percy.

XXXI.

She gazed upon the startling apparition,
Transfixed and petrified by fear and horror,
As Lot's wife, in the Biblical tradition,
Stood looking back on Sodom and Gomorrah;
But when the phantom bowed and seemed acquainted
Her senses swam, she very nearly fainted.

XXXII.

I would not have you think her superstitious,
Or that her conscience was not wholly clear,
As sometimes is the case with persons vicious.
The vision made her tremble with strange fear;
But when it stalked away and she could hear it,
She knew as well as you, 'twas not a spirit.

XXXIII.

"Come home!" she whispered, in a trembling voice.
Her lover did not move from where he stood;
The maiden's cry of terror, and the noise
Of steps retreating through the gloomy wood,
Had filled him with the most unmanly fears,
Augmented when the girl burst into tears.

XXXIV.

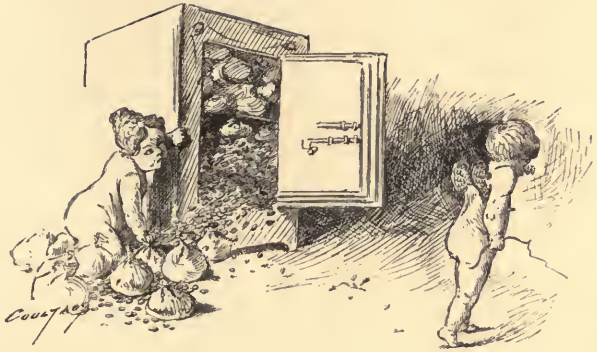
And here I'll leave them to interpolate
A very necessary explanation,
To show you how an unpropitious fate
Had brought about this painful situation;
For certainly you must have guessed aright,
'Twas Percy she had seen, and not his sprite.

XXXV.

You wonder at the seeming strange neglect
Marie had found in such an ardent lover,
And ask what more young Percy could expect,
Than at his tardy coming to discover
A rival for her hand in full possession.
It certainly was not Marie's transgression.

XXXVI.

She wrote at first a letter every day,
To which her lover ardently replied;
Then once a week in an indifferent way,
Just out of fun, you know, to pique his pride.
At first he fretted, then became offended,
Until at last their correspondence ended.



XXXVII.

Some say that "absence makes the heart grow fonder."
Perhaps it does; I never will deny it,
Although I would advise all men to ponder
Some time before they undertake to try it.
There is an adage: "When the cat's away,"
For any length of time, "the mice will play."

XXXVIII.

Alas for Percy! Though he kept away
For many weeks, he could not kill his love,
Which grew to such a longing, day by day,
To see her face, and from her lips to prove
The truth of his heart-torturing alarms,
He came—to find her in another's arms.

XXXIX

The where and how you know. Now, having spun
Into my tale this short interpolation,
I'll spread my sails before the wind, and run
Without a tack unto my destination,
Unloading there a cargo of morality
That cannot fail to please you by its quality.

XL.

We'll first dispose of Percy. On the morrow,
After a night that verged upon insanity,
He made a dungeon of his heart for sorrow,
And with a forced demeanor of urbanity,
He took the first train going to the city;
So here we will dismiss him with our pity.

XLI.

And now, our heroine! She passed the day
Oppressed with feelings of remorse and shame;
For Percy near and Percy far away,
She could not reason why, seemed not the same.
At first she feared she ne'er could live without him,
And then resolved to think no more about him.

XLII.

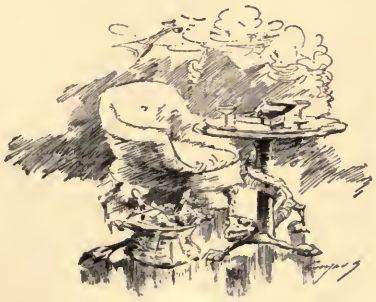
"'Tis for the best," she thought; and those who hold,
As she did, that a loveless life is best;
That high position, vanity, and gold,
Will render their possessor richly blest,
May study how her life exemplified it,
For, living for the world, Marie has tried it.

XLIII.

The summer passed away, and in the fall
She married Philip, and a sweeter bride
Had ne'er been seen, it was agreed by all;
So full of youthful loveliness and pride!
The wedding was a very swell affair;
My wealthy cousin Isabel was there.

XLIV.

And ever afterwards they've lived in peace,
And ne'er are known to have domestic quarrels.
He lives his life, enjoying at his ease
His friends, his club, a drive behind his sorrels;



While she lives hers according to her way,
And is, the gossips hint, a trifle gay.

XLV.

She keeps her horses, too, and livery,
And in her T cart every afternoon
Is driven by some gentleman. To be
Invited by her is a special boon.
She always makes her drive through Central Park,
Returning just a trifle after dark.

XLVI.

'Tis said, sometimes a melancholy man
Is seen to pass her on the Avenue,
He on the sidewalk, she behind her span;
And if a glance should pass between the two,
Although she has before been bright and gay,
She sinks back in her seat and seems "*distrait.*"

XLVII.

The dresses that she wears must cost a mint,
And satisfy the pride of any lady.
She gratifies her follies without stint,
But always keeps aloof from doings shady;
So Slander finds no place to drive a nail
On which to hang a spicy, naughty tale.

XLVIII.

She has her box at every opera,
She's one of the subscribers of the season,
And here she may be seen with her mamma,
Who always goes along, for this good reason—
She does not think it looks exactly right
For ladies to be seen alone at night.

XLIX.

Besides, her box is always visited
By scores of men, both bachelors and married;
And, strange as it may seem, I've heard it said
The latter are the ones who longest tarried.
Of course she can't receive these men alone,
Therefore her mother goes as chaperone.

L.

She's recognized as one of Fashion's beauties;
Her life is one long round of varied pleasure;
She's unencumbered with domestic duties,
And this world's goods has in abundant measure;
All which considerations go to prove
'Tis wiser far to wed for gold than love.

LI.

Love is a fleeting, rosy cloud that stains
The heaven of our youth. It passes soon,
Or else condenses and descends in rains
Of sorrow on our heads. In life's high noon
Its vapors all have melted in the skies,
And Mammon claims our fears, our hopes, our sighs.

LII.

"Put money in thy purse!" and nothing fear
Thereafter. All the world belongs to him
Who has the price to buy. Whate'er is dear
To human hearts, from a mere childish whim
To pleasure, reputation, and ambition,
Will find in money means to reach fruition.

LIII.

It is the "Open Sesame!" to halls
Of luxury and lands Elysian;
The ladder by which parvenus the walls
Of Fashion scale; the mighty talisman
Which charms young Love to wait on palsied Age—
The word "Success" inscribed upon life's page.

LIV.

To us who have the *entrée* to the best
Society, money is most essential.
A half a million out at interest
Gives one an air a trifle consequential;
But when you count your millions, eight or ten,
You are a God among your fellow-men.

LV.

Make money then the object of your lives;
A taste of Paradise on earth 'twill give you.
Good luck to men who search for wealthy wives!
And maids who seek for wealthy mates, God thrive you!
Gold rules the world; and though some poets mock it,
It makes a merry jingle in the pocket.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9–42*m*–8,'49(B5573)444

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

PS Ritter -
2718 Marie.
R514m

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 118 253 4

PS
2718
R514m